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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO NEA/ARP FOR RJACHIM/SRAMESH AND NEA/PPD
FOR WDOUGLAS.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2017

TAGS: [KMPI](#) [AMGT](#) [KDEM](#) [ECON](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATED DEMOCRACY STRATEGY FOR SAUDI ARABIA

REF: A. SECSTATE 130991
[1](#)B. 2005 RIYADH 3188

Classified By: Ambassador Ford Fraker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Per Ref A request, this constitutes Post's updated strategy for supporting reform in Saudi Arabia. To bolster and advance reform in Saudi Arabia, we need to assist the Majlis Al-Shoura and municipal councils in efforts to expand their role to include oversight, increase independence, and build operational capacity. We should support the expansion of political participation, including for women, as well as continued economic reform, including improved labor conditions. We must also work to increase religious tolerance in the Kingdom. Judicial reform is a priority for the SAG, and we should continue our efforts to engage members of the judiciary in discussions with their U.S. counterparts, as well as support efforts to increase judicial independence and transparency. For maximum effectiveness, we must work cooperatively with the SAG and broaden our range of interlocutors, using both policy and programmatic tools. We should also recognize that programs targeting religious educators and youth are key elements of political reform in the Saudi context.

[1](#)2. (C) The desired outcomes of this strategic focus are to:

- expose Shoura and local council members (including women when possible) to U.S. legislative bodies at the local, state, and national levels;
- obtain Saudi political commitment to include women in the planned 2009 elections, as well as all future elections;
- develop opportunities for members of the judiciary and Saudi legal education community to interact with their U.S. counterparts at the local, state, and national levels;
- obtain SAG compliance with all WTO accession commitments; and
- prepare the Saudi Capital Market Authority for membership in the International Organization of Securities Commissions.

[1](#)3. (C) Post's proposed policy approach is to continue to use the U.S. - Saudi Arabia Strategic Dialogue and the associated working groups as the key mechanism with which to engage the Saudi leadership on reform. In parallel, we should look for ways to broaden the dialogue on reform among Saudis across the political, social, and economic spectrum.

[1](#)4. (C) Suggested programming would aim to:

- expand IV-style programs for new municipal council members and Shoura Council members to meet U.S. counterparts;

-- expand IV-style programs for members of the judiciary and legal education community to meet U.S. counterparts;

-- expand dialogue and use other countries to work with us to draw out Saudis, especially women and religious leaders, to international fora on reform;

--further develop relations with religious educators and their institutions through speaker programs and other exchange mechanisms;

--increase engagement with Saudi youth through ACCESS English scholarships, the YES high-school exchange program, and an IV program for Saudi Boy Scout leaders; and

-- develop respect for the rule of law, transparent, inclusive regulatory practices, and better appreciation and enforcement of intellectual property rights through both capacity building and technical competence training for regulators, law enforcement officers, and adjudicatory authorities.

FRAKER